

Antsell Rock 28E- Star Emblem Peak

Lat/lon 33.7300217,-116.6414062
UTM 11S 533220E 3732280N

Elevation: 7679'

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Antsell Rock on [Peakbagger.com](#)

Current Weather on [NOAA](#)

Location: Riverside County, about 5 miles east-southeast of Idyllwild, 115 miles from Los Angeles

Nearby peaks: Southwell Peak ("South" on USGS topos), Apache Peak

Land Manager: San Bernardino National Forest, San Jacinto Ranger District (909) 382-2921

USE AT YOUR OWN RISK. CONDITIONS MAY CHANGE, AND UNEXPECTED HAZARDS MAY BE PRESENT.

About the peak

Antsell Rock is a dramatic formation on the Desert Divide that practically begs adventurers to explore it. Authors Jerry Shad and David Harris call it the "Jewel of the Desert Divide", and the name is appropriate. It was named in 1898 by a surveyor for a man he encountered making a painting of the formation, once again reminding us that it did not take a lot to get a peak named after you in those days.

Route 1 follows the Spitler Peak trail to reach the backbone of the divide, then continues north on the PCT. The route then leaves the PCT and ascends a very steep loose gully with high risk of rock fall to reach the base of the summit block where many choose to end their hike. The route finishes as a third class scramble to the top of the summit block. Holds are good but there is some exposure in parts, so this is not for the inexperienced.

Route 2 starts from Southwell Peak, from whichever direction you reached it, and departs the PCT at the saddle between South and Antsell cross country to join Route 1. This portion of the trail was and is known as the Sam Fink Trail, built almost single-handedly by Sierra Club leader Sam Fink, which was later incorporated into the PCT when the latter was created. We have named a nearby peak in his honor, and you can learn more about him and his trail there.

The most common variation is to ascend Antsell via Route 1 and descend via Route 2 to avoid descending the loose gully. One can also hike Antsell by starting from the Yokoji Zen Center in Apple Valley. This is not an official route because it crosses Zen Center property. The route ascends to the saddle between Apache and Antsell. It is extremely brushy unless recently trimmed, and route finding is difficult. Because of the poor trail conditions it is usually better to take Route 1 instead.

Antell is one of four HPS peaks that require third class climbing. Because of the risk of rock fall a climbing helmet is recommended, and required on official outings.

Notes: HPS policy requires the possession and use of a climbing helmet on Class 3 terrain or where the hazard of rockfall is present. It is recommended that this peak be climbed with someone who is already familiar with the route.

Club-sponsored trips to this peak must be led by M-rated leaders or above or by I-rated leaders approved by the Angeles Chapter Safety Committee.

Alternate routes: If you hiked in from the southeast, it is not necessary to go all the way back to the saddle where you left the trail. Descend back down into the notch at the base of the vertical crack. From here descend east-northeast down a steep gully to the PCT. There are one or two spots on this route that make it hard to ascend. Descending is no problem except for possible rock fall.

Alternatively, you can descend via Route 1 to the saddle southeast of Antsell Rock. It is recommended that you have ascended this route before using it for a descent.

Special conditions: Wilderness permits are required under all circumstances. Permits are limited to 12 hikers. Permits may be obtained from the Idyllwild Ranger Station just off SR 243 at 54270 Pine Crest Road. There is a self-issue permit stand outside of the ranger station. Permits may be obtained in advance from:

San Jacinto Ranger District

54270 Pinecrest

P.O. Box 518

Idyllwild, CA 92549

Voice: (909) 382-2921

Fax: (951) 659-2107

Antsell Rock has 2 official HPS routes:

Antsell Rock Route 1

Distance: 14 miles round trip on trail and cross-country

Gain: 3600

Time: 8-9 hours round trip

Difficulty rating: Class 3, strenuous, climbing helmets required

Navigation difficulty: Difficult

Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#)

Road type: Paved

Adventure Pass may be required

Driving directions:

- Go south on I-215 to the Ramona Expressway. Turn left (east).
- Go east and then southeast on the Ramona Expressway until it ends at SR 74. Turn left (east).
- Go east on SR 74 to Mountain Center.
- Continue east on SR 74 for 3.5 miles to Apple Canyon Road on the left. Turn left.
- Pass the entrance to the Hurkey Creek Campground on the left and continue 2.6 miles to a large parking area on the left. Park here. This is the parking area for the Spitler Peak Trail.

Hiking directions:

- The Spitler Peak Trail, 3E22, begins at a square post at the north end of the parking area. From the parking area (4950'), hike up the trail to where it meets the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) on the ridge between Apache Peak and Spitler Peak.
- Turn left (north) and follow the trail to a trail junction just south of the two summits of Apache Peak. The PCT goes right.
- Keep left and hike up to the saddle between the two summits. Hike north along the main ridge until it descends again to the PCT north of Apache Peak.
- Continue on the PCT until you reach the saddle between Apache Peak and Antsell Rock (about 6900'), just west of the boundary of Sections 23 and 24. There is a trail junction (not obvious) near this saddle. The trail to the left goes down Apple Canyon about 2 miles to the Zen Center, then another 2 miles on a road to the Spitler Peak Trail trailhead. Continue northwest along the PCT.
- Go about 1/2 mile farther on the PCT to a minor gully where there should be a duck on the uphill (left) side of the trail.
- Leave the trail and go up the loose steep slope to a saddle between two rocky prominences. The one to the right (west) is the summit.
- From this saddle, go along a brushed-out trail along the left side of the summit prominence about 15 yards.
- Then follow a ducked class 3 route up the rocky face to the summit ridge and then left up to the summit.

Additional Route notes:

Antsell Rock Route 2- From Southwell Peak

Distance: 1.5 miles one way on trail, use trail, Gain: 500
and cross-country, 17 miles round trip over Time: 2 hours one way
Southwell
Difficulty rating: Class 3, strenuous, climbing Navigation difficulty: Difficult
helmets required, with Southwell Peak
Trailhead location on [Google Maps](#) Road type: Paved
Adventure Pass may be required

Driving directions:

- See the Southwell Peak guide.

Hiking directions:

- From Southwell Peak, descend back to the PCT.
- Hike this trail south past bump 7520'+ to saddle (7200'-) on the ridge just before the trail descends on the left (east) side. This is about 1/2 mile north-northwest of Antsell Rock.
- Leave the trail here and follow the rocky ridge that alternates between class 1 and class 2. Pass the rocky bump just north of Antsell on the right (west) side and hike up to the face of Antsell in a narrow notch.
- Facing Antsell, a large class 3 crack goes up to the right. Go up this crack to a ledge at the top.
- Turn left and contour left up past some trees into a gully. Go up this gully crossing an easier rock path until you come out on the ridge.
- Turn right and go up the ridge to the summit.

Additional Route notes: